

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 28, 2019

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:


We write with urgency surrounding the dangerous situation between India and Pakistan in the Kashmir region and the vital need for diplomacy. We affirm India's right to self-defense in response to attacks planned and executed by Pakistani-based terrorist groups designated by the United States and United Nations and welcome Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's recent decision to release a captured Air Force officer from India. However, we have ongoing concerns that this crisis may scale into an all-out war given the thousands of troops amassed along the countries' border, heavy artillery barrages and gunfire recorded in the area and tank columns taking formation. We share your position that Pakistan must do more to combat these anti-India extremist groups that destabilize the region and urge you to use your authority to pursue a peaceful resolution to this conflict before it grows.

In light of recent events, and the specter of the use of nuclear weapons should Pakistan and India continue to escalate hostilities, we strongly implore the direct and sustained engagement of the highest levels of your administration. As you are aware, the United States historically has conducted essential diplomacy to defuse previous crises in South Asia. We are heartened by the Secretary's engagement and your recent statement that "We've been in the middle" to calm heightened tensions in the Kashmir. As in the past, the United States should continue to take a hands-on approach, and, when appropriate, should work with other interested regional actors to apply appropriate pressure in Islamabad and New Delhi and address the underlying causes of conflict.

We would be remiss if the issue of important State Department vacancies subject to Senate confirmation was not raised. Our nation currently lacks an ambassador to Pakistan, and despite her sterling reputation, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice G. Wells remains serving in an "Acting" capacity. We encourage you to submit expeditiously to the Senate nominees for these critical positions and am intent to confirm qualified nominees in a timely manner. The United States must be well-positioned to assist in conflict prevention and mitigation that threatens the interests of our nation and our partners.

We thank you for your attention and look forward to working with you to address key international security challenges.

Sincerely,


Jerry Moran
United States Senator


Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator